

To the Members of the California State Senate:

I am returning Senate Bill 1591 without my signature.

This bill would amend the current eligibility requirements for Regional Occupational Centers and Programs (ROCP) by allowing an unlimited number of pupils who are not 16 years of age when they start the school year, but will turn 16 during the school year, to receive career technical education in one of these programs. Current law already allows ineligible students to enroll in these programs, if an appropriate waiver is filed and approved.

I am a strong supporter of career technical education programs and want to see the State's high school and postsecondary system reformed to provide better opportunities to acquire real world job skills and qualifications. A comprehensive reform proposal would create opportunities for students who do not choose to pursue four-year college degrees to become better prepared to enter the workforce upon graduation.

I wholeheartedly support California's policy to have all students meet high academic standards in core subjects and believe all students who want to pursue college or a vocational career should have the opportunity to receive the type of academic preparation that will enable them to succeed. I think all students should have opportunities to explore their interests and special capabilities and to understand what career choices they have.

However, the State is already allocating hundreds of millions of dollars for career technical education and training across a number of agencies and departments. These resources should be better coordinated to maximize the benefit for all Californians. Therefore, the more appropriate approach to tackling this issue is for my Administration to work with the Legislature in developing a comprehensive plan for strengthening career technical education programs in the State, instead of simply enacting piecemeal changes, as this bill contemplates.

For these reasons, I am unable to sign this bill.

Sincerely,

Arnold Schwarzenegger